

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AF-06 OPIC-03

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----- 113152

R 241500Z FEB 76

FM AMCONSUL OPORTO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 803

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

DIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PO, AO

SUBJECT: REACTION TO RPA RECOGNITION

REF: LISBON 1161 (DTG 231513Z FEB 76)

1. PRESS: SUBDUED TONE OF INEVITABILITY CHARACTERIZED OPORTO PRESS REACTION TO FEB 22 ANNOUNCEMENT THAT PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES HAD RECOGNIZED MPLA GOVERNMENT (REFTEL). THE SENTER-LEFT "COMERCIO DO PORTO," OPORTO'S ONLY DAILY TO HAVE TAKEN STRONG EDITORIAL POSITION AGAINST MPLA RECOGNITION, CRITICIZED PRESIDENTIAL DECLARATION FOR IGNORING HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF ANGOLAN REFUGEES AND THOUSANDS OF FOREIGN TROOPS IN ANGOLA. HOWEVER, COMERCIO APPEARED RELIEVED THAT DECISION HAD BEEN MADE WITHOUT CAUSING MAJOR POLITICAL CRISIS AND THAT PORTUGAL COULD RETURN TO BUSINESS OF BUILDING DEMOCRACY VIA COMING ELECTIONS. BOTH COMERCIO AND LEFTIST-INDEPENDENT PRIMEIRO DE JANEIRO CONTRASTED STRONG CONDEMNATION OF RECOGNITION BY POPULAR DEMOCRATS (PPD) AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CENTER PARTY (CDS) WITH MORE AMBIGUOUS SOCIALIST (PS) STATEMENT.

2. REFUGEES: AREA REACTION THUS FAR HAS BEEN LIMITED TO
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ANNOUNCEMENT RELEASED BY OPORTO DISTRICT COMMISSION BLASTING

DECISION AS "JUST ANOTHER BETRAYAL OF THE REFUGEES." PREDICTIONS
OF VIOLENCE HAVE AS YET PROVED UNFOUNDED.

3. COMMENT: MOST REFUGEE SPOKESMEN RECOGNIZE THAT ANY MORE
VIOLENCE IN THE NORTH ONLY SERVES THE INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNISTS.
HOWEVER, THE REFUGEES REMAIN SO UNORGANIZED AND UNDISCIPLINED
THAT ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE PARTICULARLY IN MORE RURAL AREAS.
FAILURE OF PS TO CONDEMN RECOGNITION WILL COST THEM WHAT FEW
VOTES THEY MIGHT HAVE RECEIVED IN REFUGEE CIRCLES. POLITICAL
IMPACT OF REFUGEE VOTE SHOULD BE VIEWED NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF
THEIR NUMBERS (EXCEEDING 10 PERCENT OF POPULATION IN SEVERAL
DISTRICTS) BUT ALSO POTENTIAL INFLUENCE AMONG FAMILY AND FRIENDS.
PENNER

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